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TURKMENISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

TB Treatment Restores Hope

USAID helps to implement a more effective treatment of TB in Turkmenistan.



Dr. Bayramova is explaining Igor about TB.
Photo: Project HOPE

The most important moment in a TB patient's treatment is convincing them to take TB treatment in a timely and regular fashion."

Dr. Bayramova, trainee of the USAID-supported TB prevention program.

Igor used to have cold-like symptoms quite often and would usually just wait until they went away. So when last autumn he developed cough again, followed with high temperature, fatigue, and loss of appetite, he treated it with cold medication. But two weeks later, Igor was still feeling sick, and the cold medication did not seem to work. Igor lost lots of weight and started coughing up some excretions. When he finally visited his family physician, he was diagnosed with advanced tuberculosis (TB).

Igor was immediately admitted to the TB Prevention center. Dr. Irina Vitalyevna Bayramova, who had been trained by the USAID-funded TB prevention program, prescribed him the new TB treatment strategy DOTS that she had learned in the training. Under this WHO-recommended strategy, Igor underwent a two-month drug treatment under the direct supervision of medical staff. With counseling and advice from Dr. Bayramova, Igor learned about his disease and the importance of thoroughly following through the full treatment course. Dr. Bayramova says, "The patient's attitude towards his disease and treatment process is one of the

main factors in the treatment success." After the first two months, he no longer had the open form of TB and was released to complete treatment at his local medical facility.

Now Igor has fully recovered from the disease, has returned to his previous life style, and is building plans for his future. He only regrets that he had not visited his doctor earlier and allowed his disease to reach such an advanced stage.

Tuberculosis is one of the main threats for the health not only in Turkmenistan, but in many countries in the region. USAID provides comprehensive support to solve this problem through a TB prevention program, implemented by Project HOPE. This program plays an essential role in the implementation of the DOTS strategy in Turkmenistan. It helps train doctors and nurses in diagnostics and treatment of TB in accordance to the international standards, provides TB drugs, equipment, and reagents for TB laboratories, as well as develops informational materials for medical specialists and general population, establishing an effective system for drug management, and in the establishment of an effective system for monitoring and evaluation.